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A
S E R M O N

Preached

At the Parish Church of
E L S I N G
I N
N O R F O L K

On Wednesday the 14th Day of January 1708;
being the Day appointed by Her Majesty, for a general Fast and Humiliation, to be observed in a most Solemn and Devout Manner.

By *John Hardy*, R.

Is not this the Fast that I have Chosen? to loose the Bonds of Wickedness, to undo the heavy Burdens, and to let the Oppressed go Free, and that you brake every Yoke? Isaian 58. 6.

N O R W I C H,
Printed for T. Goddard Bookseller. 1708.



Nehemiah IX. 33.

*Howbeit thou art just in all that is brought upon us,
for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly.*

AS for the occasion whereon these Words do depend, if we look back upon some Passages going before, there will need no very close inspection to discover it; and which being so very sad and lamentable, I cannot think it improper for this Solemn Day of Fasting and Humiliation, The Text is plain and lies open to any ordinary Apprehension, and indeed so evident, that nothing in Nature can be more, that God is just in all the Dispensations of his Providence to us, and we sinful and wicked Creatures that have highly provoked the dreadful Wrath of the Almighty, and without a timely Repentance and Submission there's no likelihood that those Troubles and Calamities which he hath inflicted on us should ever be removed, or he again reconciled to us. Yet nothing less than our penitential acknowledgement that his Proceedings are all managed with equal justice, and that *we have done wickedly* will suffice to that end, and therefore have I chosen the Words of the Text, which as they come from those Devout Levites who stood up, ver. 4. lifted up their Bodies as near as they could toward Heaven whilst their aspiring Souls were mounting up thither, in the Heights of Prayer and Supplication; are most important and material and not unworthy of our highest regard, in these Times of Fear and Danger. And truly here was good cause that these Pious Votaries should lift up their Hearts and Voices unto God for his Assistance: For if we look into the 1st Chap. and the 3d verse, we shall find that the People of the Jews had a very ill time of it, and were in great Afflictions and reproach, ~~by~~ their goodly City, the very Seat of Strength and

when

and whereon, Nature had as it were, emptied all her Forces became notwithstanding a Spoil to the Great Conqueror of the Gentiles, of whom we have this Cruel account,

2 Kings 25. that he with the chief Martialist had broken down the Walls, and made the Gates thereof a heap of burnt Ruines, and more than that

the very Temple, the Lords Peculiar and the Joy of the whole Earth, was also visited with the Flame of a devouring Fire, and so were those Stately Palaces that seem'd to emulate the Skies, consumed to Ashes, and were no less frequent than pitied Spectacles.

Neither did the punishing hand of divine Justice stay here, and take up with that populous Cities overthrow, but (as Troubles seldom come single) the Rage and Barbarity of those fierce Pagan Warriors reach'd so far as to fill the Streets thereof with dead Bodies, and to make their Swords bright with the blood of Thousands murder'd Corps.

Psal. 79. 2. that could not obtain the common Civility of a Grave: and which was the saddest thing of all, so mad was their Fury, that they made no difference in that lamentable Slaughter, but Old and Young, Matrons and Virgins, Mothers and Infants, Princes and Priests, were all alike delivered to the Sword, and ~~also~~ involved in the same greivous Calamity. And therefore those mourning Elders, that were Sanctified for the Holy Office of Priesthood, having fixt themselves upon the Thoughts of so Tragical and sad a Story, did not without good reason imp'ore the Aid of Heaven against those barbarous Oppressors, and Authors of their Ruin, that had made so famous a City, like a Hill of Rubbish, and laid her Pinnacles in the Dust: This must needs ~~from~~ great Pity from these especially that carried in their Minds the Idea of her former Glories. And now ~~this~~ present need of Gods powerful Help, who only was able to Redress this Woful Estate of theirs, ~~which~~ was such that it would not suffer them to be silent, but as it filled their Hearts with sorrow, so it opened their Mouths to let their Sins out, by a humble Confession. *Vea. 2.* They confess their Sins, and the Inquiries of their Fathers. And as the Prophet

Hosaa 5. 15. hath told us, there is nothing which brings the Creature so near to God, as Troubles and Afflictions, so in the 4 verse we are told that they

being
out
their

they publickly met to invoke God Almighty's Protection, and being in great Distress, they cried with a loud Voice unto the Lord, and stood close to their Prayers, that he would put an end to their Calamities, and cure them of those Wounds, which the hand of his Justice had inflicted on them. In short, being assembled with fasting, ver 1, and wearing Sackcloth, and other mourning Habits, in Token of their Grief and Heaviness, they Adored that most High God with that Humility which befits Creatures, conscious of their own Vileness, and of the Infinite and Incomprehensible Majesty, they had so many ways offended: and being sensible of their most Horrid Wickedness, they Heartily, and with a general Lamentation bewailed themselves in the presence of Almighty God, and with one Voice acknowledged his Equity and Righteousness, even in the severest Dispensations: That his Vengeance upon Jerusalem was a Vengeance of Justice, and their Sins the only cause of it. *Howbeit Thou art Just in all that is brought upon Us &c.*

The whole Text consisteth as you see, of a Two-fold Confession.

First, with respect to God clearing him from all Suspicions of his Injustice, and that his Proceedings must needs be exactly Just, because he himself is Righteous: He cannot (~~be moved~~ *many* through Fear or Secular Interest) be moved from the Rule of Equity, *He is just in all that is brought upon, us for he hath done Right.*

Secondly, Here is also a humble Confession with Respect to our selves, or a Penitential Acknowledgement that *We have done Wickedly*, and this Consideration should make us heartily Grieve for the Offences wherewith we have provoked Our Heavenly Father, and take up holy Resolutions of a new Life, or else we get no pardon, but fall into deeper Guilt and Misery. These are the main Parts of the Text, and of which I shall speak with as much brevity as plainness.

First, I am to give you my Thoughts concerning the Just Proceedings of Almighty God: And here I cannot but call to mind the excellent saying of that Royal though Pagan Philosopher, As God is wonderful in his doings, so are they all of wise Providence: Whatsoever Marc. Anton. he thinks fit to effect is perfectly Holy, and according to Right and Equity; and yet we are forward enough

many others

fall

nough to entertain hard Thoughts of him, and if he continue
 not the same favours to us, which he afforded to others, we
 strait accuse him of Partiality: And as for our Troubles and
 Distresses we are apt to harbour unquiet Apprehensions that
 God is too Severe, and to fly at his Face, instead of falling
 down at his Feet, as if our Calamities were unjustly inflicted
 on us. Nay if we succeed not in our Undertakings, or have
 omitted our Duties, or run our selves into Judgement, we are
 even then ready to fall upon God, and accuse him for the
 Miscarriage: He is very hardly spoken of, that he is want-
 ing in his Assistance, and have not regard to Justice and Equi-
 ty. *But far be it from God (saith Elihu) that he should do*
Wickedness, and from the Almighty that he
Job. 35. 10, 17. should commit Iniquity, or how dare we
 condemn him who is most powerful as well
Rom, 16. 27. as Just? And who so wise as the only Wise
 God? he is that great Eye of the World be-
 holding all the Concernments of the Sons of Men, and as a
 Jewish Doctor hath told us, watching perpetually over our
 Actions, and 'tis very certain he best knows what is fittest
 for us. Neither is he sparing of his Favours, but affordeth
 us Rules and helps enough to be good, yet this is our fault,
 we have not the Grace to consider it, but will be doing of e-
 vil, and then think we have received hard measure from God,
 without any desert of ours, if he punish us for it, and this he
 will surely do, if Repentance Step not between. He is Just,
 and we sinful and miserable, and such as a Mans Cause is,
 such will the Judgement of God be upon him, and let our Suf-
 ferings be never so great, they ought to work us to a humble
 contentedness and Satisfaction with that Providence which
 brought them upon us; and if an offended God be pleased to
 set up a Building of Glory to himself, upon our Ruins, we
 must Acquiesce with it, and be of *Job's* Temper, who re-
 ceived the doleful Tydings of his great Losses with Acclama-
 tions of Praise, and submitted to Gods taking from him as well
 as giving to him; and whosoever he be that
Job. 1. 21. is under his afflicting hand, he must not think
 the worse of God, because of those Troubles
 which he hath brought upon himself, by reason of his Sins,
 but ought rather to cry out in the Words of
Mic. 7. 9. the Prophet. I will bear the Indignation of
the

the Lord, because I have sinned against him. To be short, whatever befalls, as it is of Gods own ordering, so it must needs be justly allotted to us, For how can the great Lord of all whose Will is the Rule of Rectitude, do any thing unrighteously? Nay, without any more ado God makes every Action just by doing it, seem it never so irregular, and even to contradict the Law of Nature. and though we can't well Reconcile his Proceedings with our reason, nor track those Paths of his that are past finding out, yet must we own them to be Just and equal, and let him *Rev. 15. 3.* deal never so severely with us, it is our Duty not to repine, but to seek by Submission to satisfy his Displeasure, for we cannot but be sensible, that the right lies on his Side and not on Ours, and therefore when all is done, we need not scruple to make this Unfeigned and Sincere Confession in the Words of the Text, *Thou O God art Just in all that is brought upon us.*

And indeed this ALL, if we take cognizance of our own deserts, is little enough. For how universally peccant, and pefective have we been in our *Pfal. 14. 3.* Christian Performances? How have we Affronted the Divine Authority, which should have bound and limited us in our Conversation? and how frequently have we violated the Righteous Laws of a Wise and Powerful God, and broken through the Fences of Duty which he hath set to keep us within the awfulness of his dreadful Majesty? With what Face then can we multiply our Complaints against him, and how little reason is there that we should open our Mouths before him, unless it be to implore his Grace and Favour, with a penitent and humble Supplication? Our Troubles can't be so many but we have deserved them all, and God hath punished us as Men that in his Eyes are apparently Wicked. We have neither regarded any of his Commands, nor followed those good courses to which we have been directed, but have gone on in our Sins, till they cried to Heaven for Vengeance; and now God, who Governs all things with an unerring Equity, hath made us feel what it is to offend him, and which way soever we cast our Eyes, we may behold what a lamentable condition we are in, and as our Calamities come not without his Order, so to augment our grief, there is no end, but only a Change of 'em. And for what else are we so deeply Afflicted with

with the Terrour of War or cruel Battels, but for the greatness of our unreformable Wickedness; and 'tis by his just Indignation that so many mighty Warriors are called together to their Task of Slaughter, and to be the Executioners of his Anger,

Ezek. 7. 23. The Land is full of bloody Crimes, saith the Prophet, and the Inhabitants thereof have

withdrawn their Obedience, and so made themselves incapable of God's great Mercies. The case is quite alter'd with us, our Halcyon Days of Peace and Happiness are fled away, and instead thereof there is nothing but Ruin about us, and God, as its well known, hath unsheathed the Sword

of Vengeance, and hath filled it with Blood,

Isaiah 34. 6. saith the Prophet, or we may infer from the viciousness of our Lives, that it is drawn to

lance those Ulcers Sin hath made in us, and as one speaketh, to let out the Imposthumate matter of our Corruptions. What-

ever be the cause, 'tis certain God was moved thereunto by

Wise and Just Reasons: and that he hath been displeased at us,

we can look no where but we see sufficient proofs to convince

us. How many Examples have we of those that are cut off,

twisting either by the force of the Sword, ~~or withstanding~~ the Silver

Cords, and Ligaments of Nature; or else through the Fatal

Discharges of those Death-thundering Cannons which fill our

Ears with their hideous Sound, and do, as it were, proclaim

aloud our Transgressions, and ought to make us sorrowful that

we have offended so great a God. And such as are thus snatch-

away without any regarding of it, 'tis to be

Job 4. 20, feared they dy at once a double Death, and

Ezek. 31. 17. fall into the Sorrows of a sad Eternity. All

Job 37. this is enough to make the Heart to Tremble

and to be moved out of his Place. And yet

we may thank our iniquities that have so deservedly procured

these Punishments towards us.

Neither is this all, God's Justice hath not on'y taken hold

of us upon the Land, and deep'y stained it with the Blood of

the Sain; but his Judgements are made manifest in the deep,

and there is Sorrow too on the Sea, and we

Jer 49. 23. sinful Creatures have also helped forward our

lection Afflictions in that vast number of Waters:

There did our Incensed God p'y us so hard with the Stormes,

and Tempests of his Indignation that our well-rigged Ships

were

all scatter'd on that unruly Element, like Chaff upon the Earth^s and many of them were wracked and split upon the Rocks, and our hopes perisht with them. And which is yet more to be Lamented, she that carried that Heroick and Adventurous ADMIRAL * whose unwearied Course * *Sr. Cloudfly* in Actions of Valour, hath left behind him a *Shovel.* Deathless Memory; had neither the Favour to be spared from Sinking, but the Men thereof went all alike down into the Springs of the Sea, and ended their Lives under the foldings of that watery Mantle, This was a sore Judgement, and indeed a sad Spectacle to se so many dead Bodies rolling on their floating Bed of Waves, and not suffered so much as to enjoy the common Rites of Burial, though for the time they were terrible enough to their Enemies. These with many others, even whole Armies of Evils, have surrounded us on every side, and from hence we may easily conclude that God hath been provoked and in great Wrath against us, and yet we must still maintain that *He is just in all that is brought upon us, for he hath done Right* and we can have no ground of Cavill against him.

Yea what Lord is there so great as he? and who dares to oppose himself to God? or may presume to say this or that is not well done? *Shall not the Judge of all the Earth*

do Right? Said that blessed Patriarch in his *Gen. 18. 25.*

Requit for Sodom. And thus Moses who had *Deut. 32. 4.*

that Familiar and Sociable conference with God

in the Mount, that he came down from thence shining with the Raies of Anticipated Glory; gives this account of him, that his Work is perfect; *For all his Ways are Judgement, a God of Truth and without Iniquity, Just and Right is he.* And thus speak that persecuted, yet Holy and Devout

Psalmist, *Righteous art thou O Lord, and Up- Psal. 119. 137.*

right in thy Judgements. And to the same *Rev. 15, 3.*

purpose was that Triumphant Song of the

Martyred Saints, Great and Marvelous are thy Works Lord God Almighty, Just and True are thy Ways thou King of Saints. And

there be many other Texts besides whereby we may come to understand the Truth of this Assertion, that God is Righteous and that his Providences are all managed with exact Justice, though they look never so strange unto us; and they will surely appear so to every Man that useth his Reason. For how can he be an Enemy to Equity himself, who binds us so fast to the Practice of

Mic. 6. 8.

Prov. 21. 3.

it? and takes such a peculiar Care of the Righte-

ous? *What doth the Lord require of thee; but**do Justly?* and we have it from the Wisest ofMen, *that to do Justice and Judgement is more**acceptable to the Lord, than the Sacrifices of the Temple.* And

therefore they will need no more Words to prove, what I have

already affirm'd, that God who Rules over all, will do nothing

contrary to his Justice or Fidelity, but hath done right notwith-

standing those Judgements of his which have been very general

as well as Terrible, and 'tis more Gods Mercy than our merits

that our Troubles and Adversities have been no greater: We

must then clear him from all Unjust imputations, and take the

blame wholly upon our Selves. God must have his Will, and

Rule we must Vote with it and for it, as the ~~Law~~ of Right, and

let him take what Course he please with us; We have no safe-

ty but in Submission; and there's no escaping from him, but by

becoming Enemies to Sin, and by Reforming: and the best

proof thereof will be to bethink our Selves of that Remedy,

which by many is utterly neglected, by none sufficiently regard-

ed, and that is heartily to acknowledge that we have done amiss

or else we shall never have the favour to be freed from our

present Calamities, or to excuse it to God when he comes to

judge us hereafter. And therefore methinks we need do nothing

now but melt into Tears, and bewail ourselves with great Op-

pression, that our Sins have been the cause of all that is come up-

on us: and that we may be in no further Danger of Suffering

more from God Almightyes hand, Let us frame a Process against

our Selves, and not seem better than we are, but make a Free and

Ingenious Confession, like to this of the Text *We have done Wic-**kedly.* Our second particular.

And to tell you what I think about this matter, if we have a

ny difference to the unerring Scriptures, we shall find it to be a

Duty of vast moment and importance, and such as doth as much

concern us, as our own everlasting Welfare. Confession of Sin

is a giving Glory to God from whom when we

cannot hide it, as Joshua taught it to Achan

Tis by this we do honour to his Omnipotence

and Justice, whom we have dishonour'd by presumption, Na-

stern we never so good, we are wicked in his account, and it

would be wisely done of us to Suspect our Selves, and not

offend God by pleading our Innocency; but we must go and

condemn our selves before him, and then patiently wait upon

his Mercy ; we are undoubtedly all Sinners, by Nature there is never a better of us, and our Crimes are neither uncertain nor unknown, and for that reason we can with no safety conceal them : for then we do but add greater offences to those lesser we have already committed, and that we need not do for any scarcity. We are extremely wicked, there's an Universal degeneracy among us, and we have offended God in so many kinds, that we cannot more vindicate our Selves, than we can count their number ; yea so void are we of Piety, and so little do we regard the Commandments of God, that the slightest Temptation makes us to Swerve from them ; And (to be more particular) casting aside all Fear of God's Threatnings, we have nourish'd up our selves in Riot and Excess, abused our Strength to Luxury and all kind of Sensual Pleasures, and have followed our unbridled Lusts and Libidinous Appetites, as close as the Hunter doth his Prey : though they are of so dangerous and malignant Nature, that they fight against the Soul ; yet 'tis plain that this *1 Pet. 2. 11.* present (and Sin hath made it worthy to be called a Hellish) Age, is as Ripe as it can well be with Leadeness, and this may be one cause that now we are beset with so many Troubles, and are in that Calamitous State wherein without deep Contrition, and an unfeigned Sorrow, we have nothing left but Dispair and miserable Expectations.

And our being so vainly flattered and puff'd up with Pride and Ambition may well be another. There's too much of that costly and expensive folly among us, and such Indications of a haughty and ~~superstitious~~ *Superstitious* Behaviour, that, as it was the noted Sin of Israel, our Pride doth Testifie to our Face, *Hos. 7. 10.* That's a grand Ingredient I am sure, in the Nations guilt, and very inconsistent with the Subjection, Honour and Veneration which we owe to God : and as he hath declared that he hates all Pride and Arrogancy, so hath he thought fit to humble us, and to let us feel the *Prov. 8. 13.* fierceness of his Anger, for Glorifying too much in our own worth, without regarding our dependance upon him.

Besides, the Cries of oppressed Persons, who in the bitterness of their Souls, have called Loud for Vengeance : do plainly tell us what Mischief our injustice hath done ; and how terrible we have made them by our cheating and defrauding them of their Rights. And though we have Lien out of the ~~Justice~~ walk of Justice, yet God who hath all power, in his hands hath found us out, and Severely exacted of us this Guilt also.

Or

Or (to guess more truly) it may be we have minded nothing but our Pleasures, have been Lovers of them

2 *Tim.* 3. 4, more than Lovers of God, and have lain melting in sensual Delights, when we should more

seriously have attended to the Duties which the Glorious God has enjoined Us, and presuming upon his merciful Nature, we have lived as we listed our Selves, and made no Conscience of what is given us in Commandment but have either wholly omitted, or very ill performed it. God's Book hath not been perused, his Temples not frequented, his Throne not solicited with Prayers, nor have we had that free Access to the Holy Sacrament which is required of us, though of all others, it be a Duty most Instrumental and O-

Short perative of our Salvation. In ~~that~~ there is nothing more obvious to the General, Eye then our Abuse of Gods Mercies conferred upon us, and we have made such unsutable Returns, for his great and Signal Blessings, that it may well deserve to be called our greatest Guilt : and as to our Peace, Safety and Success against our Enemies, we have made a very indifferent use of 'em, by Strife and Envyings and Divisions amongst our Selves, instead of Living together in holy Communion and Love, we have treated one another with that despite and malice, as if good Nature and Charity were things of mere Indifference.

And now as 'tis sore enough that we have been Guilty of some such Crimes as these, so its high time that God should make us examples of his Displeasure, and punish us for our Abominable and unheard of Provocations. And thus hath he dealt with us, to make us Reflect upon our Lives, and to shew us our Sins, and we must still maintain that our present Calamities are not sent, but for somewhat that is amiss, and not yet amended, it is our fault alone and our Misery too, that we are under such unhappy Circumstances ; and the Judgements that have siezed on us, are of our own procuring, and of which we have not Power to deliver our Selves, but by our penitential acknowledgements.

And therefore let us, ere it be too late, address our Selves to God, in that sorrowful manner which becometh true Penitents, and with the unfeigned Language of our Hearts, Let us confess our Sins unto he Lord, and be exceeding grieved that ever we did commit them. They are for certain extremely hateful to him, and will be damnable to us without deep and unfeigned Humiliation. God, 'tis plain, is highly offended with us, and the several Sins of our Thoughts, Words and Deeds, have made him withdrawn the hand of his merciful Protection from us, in so much that as the Prophet

speaks

speaketh. we have looked for Peace, but no
 good came, and have conceived great hopes of Comfort and Pros-
 perity, but we find nothing but sorrow, and a sad Prospect of Ru-
 before our Eyes, What Reason then have we (as the case stand
 with us) to go unto God with humble Submission, and to cry out
 with those distressed Jews, we acknowledge, O
 Lord our Wickedness, and the Iniquities of our
 fathers, for we have sinned against thee, yea,
 it seems to be the present Duty of us all to rent
 our Hearts and not our Garments; and because Sorrow is not on-
 ly our Condition, but our Duty, and we can never thrive so much
 in Grace and Goodness, as when we are well water'd with the
 Tears and Distillations of Repentance. There-
 fore also now saith the Lord, Turn ye even to
 me with all your Heart, and with Fasting and
 with Weeping and with Mourning. 'Tis this that God looks for
 in our Hands while Troubles are upon us, that we with Tears and
 fasting should loath our Selves in his Sight for
 our Abominations, that they may not prevail
 against us, This is the most effectual way, that
 I know of, to secure to ones self the true Penitent here, and the
 Reward of one hereafter. And as solemn Fasting is very proper
 to be joyned with our Prayers, so are they fed therewith. and by
 that means become edged and winged that with ease they may Soar
 aloft to the Region of Spirits, and prevail with
 God for his Grace and Assistance. And that
 devout Soul which is thus chastened, hath no Pas-
 sion for inferiour Objects, but sticks close to God and breaketh
 for the longing that it hath unto his Judgements.

Besides if there be any possible means to move our incensed God
 to lay by his Anger, and to pardon those National Sins to which
 we have all of us contributed to bring it upon us: to acknowledge
 to God freely that *We have done Wickedly*, and to justify him in his
 Proceedings, is the only way for it. If we have the Grace to for-
 sake our Sins and return to our Duty; if we make firm Resolutions
 of being more Religious and better Christians for the Future; then
 will the Lord be pleased to turn his Indignation into Pity, to par-
 don our Iniquity and remove the Punishments of it far from us..
 by this shall the Iniquity of Jacob be purged saith
 the Prophet, and this is all the fruit to take a-
 way his Sin, and thus much hath the Wise Man
 declared to be in order to pardon, or the obtaining Mercy of God.

He

Jer. 8. 15.

Jer. 14. 20,

Joel. 2. 13.

Ibid. v. 12.

Ezek. 36. 31,

Psal. 119. 20.

Isaiah 27. 9.

He that covereth his Sins shall not prosper, but
Prov. 28. 13. whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall find
 Mercy; even so much Mercy as shall quite take
 off the Guilt thereof, so as they shall never be required of the Soul.
 And if we give the like proof of our Amendment, and take care
 to reform our fore-past sinful Life we shall certainly Speed well
 with God and be graciously accepted: He will restore us to his
 wonted Favour and Protection, and turn our mourning Fasts into
 the chearful Feasts of Joy and Gladness. And I find too the much
 Famed Augustine concurring with me in this Argument, Do

Agnosce tu,
 et Dominus
 ignoscet &c.
 Ser. 88. de Tem.

thou most heartily Acknowledge thy Sins to
 God, and he of his Mercy will forgive, and
 for ever hide his Face from them. So that there
 is no Rule of Prudence like to this (and all the
 Records of Scripture do give Testimony unto
 it) that we should open our Sins by Confession
 that we have Transgressed against the Lord our God

Jer. 3. 13. God, and have not obeyed his Voice, but have

Dan. 9. 5. Rebelled, even by departing from his Precepts and

1 John 1. 6. from his Judgements. This is the only way that
 we have in order to the Purgation of our Sins, and

very needful as long as we are in hopes of a Blessed Immortality

at the last. Yea without such a Repentant Acknowledgement, and

a thorow Reformation consequent to it, there is no Heaven to be

had: but having with a sad Heart made a Confession to which

we are here exhorted, and God being pleased to forgive us the Of-

fences which we have so justly suffered, Let it be never so sudden

that we are arrested to pay our Debt to Nature, we may be as con-

fident of our Souls mounting up to that Glorious Kingdom, as

our Bodies falling down to Dust and Corruption. This therefore

if we have any sense of God, and of the misery of laying under

Displeasure, should draw us on and encourage us to apply Ourselves

speedily to him by owning our Guilt, as soon as ever we

have offended: for that's the best time of finding Mercy. And

if any means can possibly prevail with God to remove and forgive

the cause of our Sufferings, which is our Iniquity. it must be

there being nothing more probable than that such our Behaviour

will make a quick Riddance of all our Iniquities at once, so that

they shall no more be imputed to us.

But I shall ~~proceed~~ this no further only for Conclusion, Let

me add, that if we have a right notion of our Calamities, we must

needs apprehend them to be as so many Providential Calls to

for

Pursue

penitance. Let these our Days of Trouble and Danger teach us Caution, and make us afraid to go on to provoke offended Justice, for we have done it too much already; and therefore as our Saviour to the Paralytick; so say I at Parting,

Let us Sin no more, lest a worse thing befall us. *Joan 5. 14.*

God's Judgements are all restrained, *at* on our Repentance, but let lose at our Rebellions and undutifulness. What in reason then can be better advised than that we should humble our Selves before him in the most Penitent manner we are able on this Solemn Day of Fasting and Prayer? meekly acknowledging our baseness, and confessing unfeignedly that *We have done Wickedly*; and upon that Score we need not doubt but his Mercy, which is equal to his might, will induce him to excuse our former Disobedience, so as we shall never feel it to our Destruction.

In a Word, our flying to Confession and making a sincere Acknowledgement of those Sins we find our Selves most Guilty of and our hearty Resolves of Amendment for the future, will not only put us in a State of acceptance with God, but help us to his Favours as Occasion serves, and hee'll no longer use his Power to Afflict, but rather employ it to support and defend us in our Dangers. Nay we shall hereby have the happiness of those serene and quiet Times, return upon us wherein we ~~see~~ nothing but continued Tokens of the Divine kindness. And God who is the Author of every good Gift, will give us that comfort of his help again, whereby we shall be not only secured from all our Enemies, but Live very happily and have the Blessings of a very comfortable Life continued to us, even till that time the Trumpet shall sound, and we be admitted into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. *2 Pet. 1. 21.*

And now in the last Place (to leave nothing unsaid) I conceive it will not be an unseasonable, but a very proper work for us all to mix Prayers with Humiliations in this our Solemn Meeting, Let us joyn together in calling upon God earnestly, especially in the behalf of our most Gracious Sovereign, that he would so prosper all her Pious Designs and Endeavours as may best conduce to our Peace and mutual Comfort And in imitation of those Loyal Subjects of the Emperor Constantine, Let us beg with great Devotion that God would always preserve Her, whom he hath chosen to preserve us all, in whose sacred Life all our Interests are involved, Let us beseech him to pour out his Blessings upon Her, in such abundance, that she may never be in any want thereof, and to compass Her with his favour as with a shield. *out*

Psal. 5. 12. shield. And because our urgent necessities do require present relief, Let us more particularly supplicate the Divine Majesty to make haste to come and help us; to be speedy in shewing Mercy, and to give good Success to our courageous and well fought Battels, That he would be powerfully present with his Anointed, and go forth with her Fleets and Armies, and those in Alliance with her; That he would for ever take her part, and be so Aiding to her Forces that the Trophies of Victory over all Antichristian Enemies may still be seen among us, and that we may pull down the Pride, and set our Triumphant Feet on the Necks of them that hate Us that we may be no more Troubled with them, but may yet emerge a Glorious Flourishing Kingdom, to their utter disappointment and Confusion.

Now as 'tis God alone must bring such mighty things to pass so will our United Supplications to him, be most prevalent and effectual to those great ends and purposes, Let us therefore press them up with Fervency and with a hearty Devotion implore the Divine Protection this Day and ever and let every one among us do all in his power towards it, and we may then be assured that when we meet here upon this or any other Religious account The Ears of the Lord will be open to our Prayers, his merciful Eyes look upon our Miseries, and his Holy Hand extended to our Relief in this World and in the next, we shall have our Portion in the Kingdom of his Eternal Glory, which God grant us for his Mercies Sake. *Amen.*

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